

# WARRIOR LEADER

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Operation Warrior Forge

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## CADETS SET SIGHTS ON SUCCESS

Cadet Michael Federico, 1st Regiment, sets his sights downrange during basic rifle marksmanship training.

U.S. Army Photo by Al Zdarsky

### INSIDE:

**Taking Aim at BRM**  
**Building Confidence**  
**Staying Afloat**  
**Responding to Injuries**





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### Captains to be promoted sooner, serve longer as majors

WASHINGTON – The Army has increased its career developmental timeline for active-duty majors by one year, while shortening time spent as a captain.

The initiative, recently approved by Secretary of the Army Francis Harvey, will reduce pin-on time to major from 10 years and seven months to 10 years. In order to implement this, two major promotion boards will be conducted in Fiscal Year 2006.

The change sets the developmental timelines in synchronization with the Army's modularity, transformation and intermediate-level education, or ILE, requirements, said Col. Mark Patterson, chief, Officer Policy Division, G1, at the Pentagon.

### Official rest can be ticket to vacation travel

Need a vacation? Soldiers on Rest and Recuperation leave from Iraq or Afghanistan can make their way to the world's most posh destinations free.

"If someone is on R&R leave out of either Iraq or Afghanistan, the government will fly them any place that is shown as their destination on their leave orders," said Dan Yount, chief of Army Leisure Travel Services at the U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center. "For Soldiers supporting OIF and OEF, this is a benefit that could be an once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to go on a great vacation with Uncle Sam paying a major part of the expense."

### Basrah opens to commercial flights

BASRAH, Iraq -- After almost 20 years of sporadic flying and finally being grounded, the first Iraqi Airways flight landed at Basrah International Airport June 4 with the help of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region South.

The Corps' goal is to give the Iraqis a functioning civil aviation airport that will allow planes with passengers to land and take off, both domestically and internationally, according to Robert Vanoer, resident engineer for the Basrah Resident Office, Gulf Region District South.

### Nemecheck aims to continue streak at first road race of season

SONOMA, Calif. – There was a time when a Nextel Cup driver didn't want to take his hot streak to a road course. Times have changed, at least for Joe Nemecheck.

Nemecheck, who is currently on a streak with third and sixth-place finishes the past two weeks at Pocono and Michigan respectively, is looking forward with great anticipation to this weekend's Nextel Cup road race at Infineon Raceway in Sonoma.

"I think about the what ifs after a lot of races, but most times the feeling passes and I let it go," said Nemecheck, driver of the 01 U.S. Army Chevrolet. "But the two races that still gnaw at me are the two road course events last year in Sonoma and Watkins Glen (N.Y.). At each race I was running solidly in the top five, but a transmission failure eventually spoiled our day at both events."

# BEYOND THE FORGE

## REAL-LIFE STORIES of YOUNG ARMY LIEUTENANTS

Second Lt. Myke McCawley attended Warrior Forge in 2003, when it was known as the National Advanced Leadership Camp, as a member of the 8th Regiment. He graduated with major in geography and a minor in economics from California State University – Fullerton. McCawley was commissioned as a Medical Service Corps Officer May 29, 2004.

On Dec. 4 McCawley deployed to Iraq as a medical platoon leader for the 3-325th Infantry Battalion, 82nd Airborne Division, to provide support for that country's first national election in over 50 years.

In Iraq, McCawley was given responsibility for the healthcare of the 750-member task force that deployed to the Baghdad's Green Zone. He also assumed the responsibility for managing a relationship with several international agencies for the possibility of a mass casualty incident in the Green Zone.

Knowing the importance of his job, he worked with the Fijian Army that made up the United Nations contribution, and the Iraqi Ministry of Defense. McCawley's platoon is also responsible for the medical care of any Iraqi civilian injured in direct combat against or in combat support with U.S. forces.

Located in their sector was the infamous Haifa Street, said by veteran newsman Dan Rather to be "the most dangerous street in the world." This was the area in which his task force suffered a majority of their injuries – 27 in all.

Many of the injuries his unit treated were suffered by innocent Iraqis. His medical platoon was responsible for providing treatment until the casualties could be evacuated to the combat support hospital or to a civilian hospital. Many times he and his medics were responsible for the care of insurgents with whom just minutes

earlier they were engaged in battle.

When an anti-American Imam was injured by an insurgent's mortar round, the man was happy to receive treatment from McCawley's medics. And McCawley graciously accepted thanks from the local religious leader.

On Election Day, parts of the 3rd ID walked into the sector, leaving behind the protection their up-armored vehicles. The presence of a dismounted light infantry battalion in Baghdad was an unusual sight, one which the Iraqi people were not used to seeing. Nevertheless, the move engendered confidence and encouragement, inspiring many people to vote on that historic day.

McCawley said when he deployed in December he fit the mold of the "new lieutenant."

"All the guys in my platoon had been to Iraq once already," he said "and most of them to Afghanistan before that."

His training here at what is now Warrior Forge was critical as a foundation to the decisions he would be making in the field, he said – not because the training provides all the answers, but because it makes you smarter.

"My training helped me learn to think outside the box," McCawley explained. "It has been a great guide. Patrolling STX and Squad STX are great building blocks, and there is no other how-to book."

He said it's important to know that Warrior Forge won't make you a good leader unless you listen to and heed the advice of people who have been there.

For his actions in Iraq, McCawley has been awarded the Combat Medical Badge and the Bronze Star.

McCawley is at Fort Bragg enjoying two weeks of vacation and surfing on the two new surf boards he just bought. This week marked the end of a two-year surfing drought for him.



**Col. Steven R. Corbett**

*Commander*

*Western Region, U.S Army Cadet Command*

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# Female Soldier earns Silver Star in Iraq

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq (Army News Service) – The first female Soldier since World War II was awarded a Silver Star in Iraq June 16, and seven other members of her National Guard military police company received citations for valor after helping turn the tide of a convoy ambush earlier this spring.

Sgt. Leigh Ann Hester received the Silver Star, the Army's third highest award for valor, in a morning ceremony at Camp Liberty, Iraq. Staff Sgt. Timothy Nein and Spc. Jason Mike also received Silver Stars at the ceremony.

Three other members of the same squad received a Bronze Star with valor device: Spc. Casey Cooper, Spc. William Haynes II and Spc. Ashley Pullen. Sgt. Dustin Morris and Spc. Jesse Ordunez received an Army Commendation Medal with valor device. All are members of the Kentucky National Guard's 617th Military Police Company.

The Soldiers thwarted an insurgent attack against a coalition convoy March 20. The convoy of 26 supply vehicles was ambushed by about 40 insurgents southeast of Baghdad.

The 45-minute firefight left 27 insurgents dead, six wounded, and one captured. Three of the 617th Soldiers were wounded.

The MPs also confiscated a sizable weapons cache, including 22 AK-47 machine guns, 13 RPK rifles, six rocket-propelled grenade launchers, 16 RPG rockets, and about 40 hand grenades.

The firefight took place the morning of March 20, as the squad of Kentucky MPs were shadowing a convoy on a supply route southeast of Baghdad.

Twenty-six supply vehicles, many of which were 18-wheelers, were heading south on the heavily traveled route. They were driving one behind the other like ducks in a row, with a security convoy of three gun trucks interlaced between – one up front, one in the middle, one in the rear.

Trailing the convoy and not far out of sight were the 617th MPs in three armored Humvees.

Each Humvee contained a trio of Soldiers, each laden with weapons and gear, except for the trail vehicle, which also carried a medic. Gunners stood ready in the turrets with .50-caliber machine guns and Mark-19 grenade launchers.

The vehicle commanders, drivers and medic kept their eyes peeled and weapons at the ready just in case something out of the ordinary happened. That morning, something did.

"We observed the convoy we were trailing starting to make erratic movements," said Staff Sgt. Timothy F. Nein, leader, second squad.

"We saw a lot of dust being kicked up by the convoy vehicles, as if they were being engaged by an (improvised explosive device) or an ambush, so we knew something was wrong.

"My gunner said he could hear shots being fired, so we picked up the pace," Nein said.

"We moved to contact," Nein said. "We got the vehicles on the contact side, in between the convoy and the insurgents. As we got up on that side of the



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Jeremy Crisp

**Sgt. Leigh Ann Hester, vehicle commander, 617th Military Police Company, Richmond, Ky., stands at attention before receiving the Silver Star at an awards ceremony at Camp Liberty, Iraq, June 16. Hester is the first female Soldier serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom to receive the Silver Star.**

road, we realized through previous reconnaissance of the area that there was a road that paralleled the field going south."

The squad then proceeded down the main road and took a right onto the side road to flank the insurgents. "At that time," Nein said, "We noticed seven vehicles the insurgents had staged and ready.

"Doors open, trunks open; ready for a quick escape. Once we turned down that road, the insurgents didn't have a choice but to stay and fight. We had just cut off their escape route."

As soon as the squad rolled into the fray, the insurgents adjusted fire.

"As we came on the scene, the insurgents' fire all shifted," said Nein. "They realized who they needed to fire on.

"They quickly shifted all fire from the transportation convoy to us. As soon as we cut back to get in between the convoy and the insurgents, the windshield of my driver (Sgt. Dustin T. Morris) took two direct hits. The bullets failed to defeat the armored glass," Nein said.

Atop the same truck was .50-cal. gunner Spc. Casey Cooper. He said when they turned down the side road, massive gunfire was coming their way.

Rounds from small arms came toward them and impacted the rear door and its window, which yet again failed to penetrate the Humvee's armor. What happened next shocked and stunned Cooper.

"I just saw something coming at me, and fast. It

just so happened to be a (rocket propelled grenade)," he said.

The round impacted right above the rear passenger door, right below where Cooper was positioned in the turret.

"It knocked me out – completely unconscious," he said.

Only sustaining minor shrapnel wounds around the right eye and hand, Cooper would be fine, but one Soldier in the group thought he was dead. The soldier said he went up and shook Cooper, at which point he popped awake and started firing again.

In the vehicle following right behind Nein, Cooper, and Morris was 23-year-old Sgt. Leigh Ann Hester, team leader and vehicle commander from Bowling Green, Ky. Hester and her crew saw the RPG hit the lead vehicle.

"Nein's vehicle took a direct hit with an RPG as soon as we made that turn," said Hester. "I heard it hit, saw the smoke, but we kept pushing on.

"I saw Staff Sgt. Nein jump out of the truck. As soon as I saw him jump out, I was right there," Hester said. From there, Hester, Nein and company pressed their flanking advantage and engaged the enemy full force.

"On the right hand side was a berm. They were still shooting at us from there and from down in a trench line," said Hester.

"So we returned fire. I think I shot off three M203 (grenade launcher) rounds, and I don't know how many M4 (assault rifle) rounds I shot. I know I hit one of the RPK (Russian-made light machine gun) gunners," she said.

Nein and Hester were side by side, and both were being engaged with small arms fire.

"Both Sgt. Hester's and my vehicles were being engaged by an insurgent with an RPK somewhere out in the orchard field," Nein said. "I could also see an insurgent with an RPG trying to get around and fire on us.

We weren't engaging him at the time, but I think he thought we were going to. He was peering out from behind a tree, so we eliminated him."

Hester, Nein and their comrades continued to press the advantage, completely disrupting any plans the insurgents had at a successful attack. After the approximately 45-minute firefight, only three Soldiers from the 617th were wounded.

Conversely, 27 insurgents were dead. Six others were wounded; one was captured. None escaped.

The MPs from second squad also 'cached' in, confiscating 22 AK-47 light machine guns, 13 RPKs, 6 RPGs, 16 RPG rockets, 123 full AK-47 ammunition magazines, 52 empty AK-47 magazines, one full AK-47 (75) round ammunition drum, an estimated 200 loose AK-47 ammunition rounds, 2,500 (7.62mm) belted ammunition rounds, and 40 hand grenades.

*(This article is based on an MNC-I news release and a March 23 article by Spc. Jeremy Crisp of MNC-I Public Affairs.)*





By 2nd Lt. Stephen Stock  
Warrior Forge Public Affairs

One of the most important tasks for any cadet is being able to hit his target. Skill with a firearm is one of the most important factors in an Army ROTC cadet's training. It is a critical skill with which all Soldiers and Army leaders must be familiar.

With the war on terrorism staring them in the face, no time is more important than today to perfect one's marksmanship ability. The skills learned here at Warrior Forge may one day save these future leaders and their Soldiers.

"Everybody needs to know how to pick up a weapon and shoot," said Master Sgt. Levy Carcamo, NCO in charge of Basic Rifle Marksmanship training for Warrior Forge. "You never know when you will be on the front line."

BRM helps cadets hone their marksmanship skills in order to hit their targets with accuracy and persistence over a three day period.

It is here that cadets will have the opportunity to qualify with the M-16A2 rifle. Starting on Day 7, cadets receive instructions on safety, proper breathing, how to properly hold an M-16A2 rifle, how to zero the weapon with the Laser Marksmanship Training System and how to care for and use live ammunition. This small arms training leads to the opportunity to qualify on a live firing range.

On the first day of BRM, cadets receive numerous safety briefings for the firing range. Cadets practice zeroing their weapon using the LMTS ten meters away from the target. This allows the cadets to perfect their breathing, aiming, grip and trigger squeeze.

Each weapon must be zeroed to each individual cadet's preferences. After a cadet has practiced zeroing they will move to the LMTS range where targets are located 25 meters away.

"The LMTS helps save ammo using fewer rounds," said Lt. Col. Thomas Wilson, officer in charge of BRM. "This is especially important with the need (we have) for M-16 ammunition in Iraq now."

It is only after a cadet has zeroed on the LMTS that they are given the opportunity to zero on a live firing range. During the live-fire zeroing range, cadets must place five rounds within a 4 cm circle. Each cadet is



U.S. Army photo by Al Zdarsky



U.S. Army photo by Al Zdarsky

given 7 three-round magazines. When evaluating a cadet's zeroing, evaluators look for a tight shot group. The smaller the shot group, the more accurate the weapon.

"Although the zeroing was the most frustrating portion of BRM it was also the most crucial," said Cadet Joseph Fee, 2nd Regiment. "BRM is important in protecting yourself and helping to save lives in combat."

Day 8 is when cadets are finally given the opportunity to test their newly acquired skill. In order for a cadet to be considered a "go" at BRM, they must

at least hit 23 of the 40 possible targets. Targets vary in distances from 50 up to 300 meters away and consist of green enemy pop-up targets.

Once on the range cadets are given two 20-round magazines. They fire the first 20 rounds while standing up in a concrete foxhole and the last 20 rounds from the prone position on the ground.

New this year is the electronic grading method found on most military firing ranges. In previous years, cadets graded each other while they fired. Though this new method has shown an increase in first-time "no-go's," it helps preserve integrity.

After firing all 40 rounds, cadets will fall under one of four categories: No-go (22 or less out of 40), Marksman (23-29 out of 40), Sharpshooter (30-35 out of 40), and lastly, the one everyone strives for, Expert (36-40 out of 40). If cadets should happen to fail or do poorly on the range, they will have a second live fire day, with only the best score recorded.

This year it is not essential for cadets to pass the course of fire. BRM here at Warrior Forge is merely to familiarize cadets with BRM before having to complete it at the second phase of the Basic Officer Leader's Course.



U.S. Army photo by 2nd Lt. Will Brown





# Cadets face confidence builder

By 2nd Lt. Melinda Walden  
Warrior Forge Public Affairs

Monkey bars, ropes, ditches, looming towers, barricade walls and low crawls all make up what Warrior Forge calls the confidence and obstacle course.

From high up in the air, to low on the ground, cadets negotiate the course as best they can. While a lot of the obstacles test physical strengths and abilities, most of them also test one's capacity to overcome fear. Many cadets who come to camp are afraid of heights or are physically weaker than others, making the Confidence Course a tough day.

Cadets have to dig deep to find the strength to do something that scares them – and the strength to keep going when they are tired and weak.

Cadet John Ciesco, 3rd Regiment, called it a place to face fears.

"You discover what you have deep down inside."

Most cadets quickly discover that through the use of teamwork, every obstacle can be conquered. Whether it is motivation that keeps everyone going, or a helping hand over a barrier, the squads develop into cohesive units. Each unit establishes a base of trust that enables them to work quickly and efficiently.

Sergeant 1st Class Steve Mueller, a Soldier supporting the Confidence Course committee, understands confidence training and recognizes what slows cadets down.

"The hardest part for most cadets is that they're mentally weak – they don't *believe* they can do it," Mueller said. "And upper body strength is a problem for some cadets."

"Overcoming fear and displaying confidence in front of their peers is important in their road to success and development into leaders," Mueller added. "In a year or so they'll have to stand in front of their Soldiers and display confidence to get them to follow."

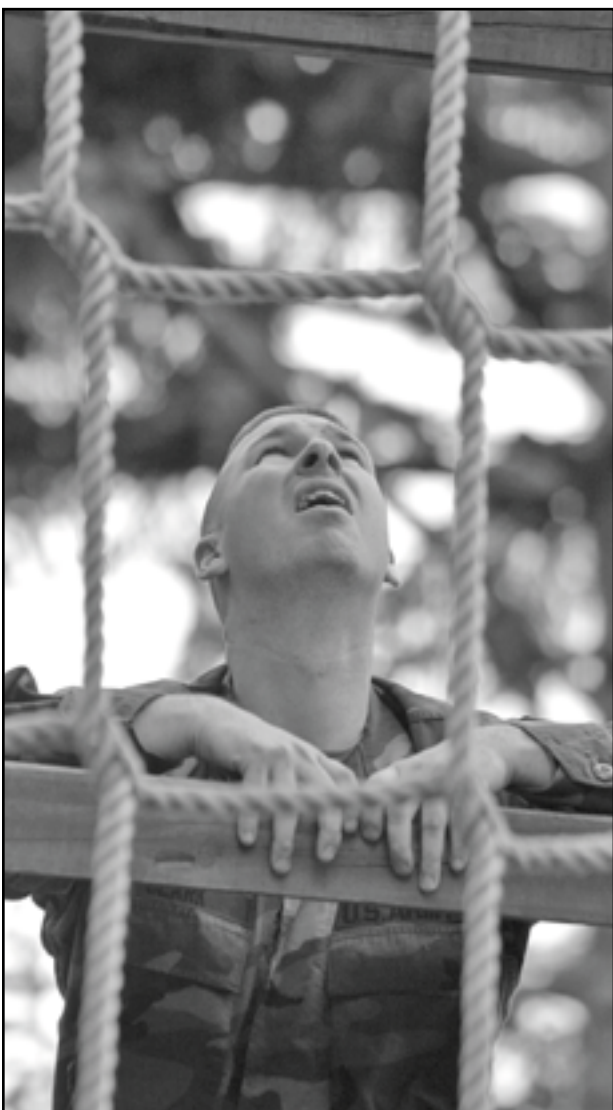
Some cadets find it difficult to tackle individual stations or complete the course. Cadet Samirah Mohammed, 3rd Regiment, claimed the course is a place where you can't worry about your own needs, but rather "you suck it up for the team even though it's tough, and you fight through it."

The confidence course tests a cadet's strengths and weaknesses in order to build confidence in themselves and their teammates, and to also have a lot of fun.

U.S. Army photos by Al Zdarsky  
and 2nd Lt. Melinda Walden



Cadets from 1st Regiment slide, climb and ponder their way down, through and over the obstacles set before them at the confidence course.







# Cadet remembers family's escape from Cambodian prison

By Janey Fassbender

Warrior Forge Public Affairs

Fourth Regiment Cadet Ekzhin Ear learned to respect the military at an early age. He was taught to stand whenever soldiers walked by. The truth is that it wasn't out of respect that he obeyed, it was out of fear. Ear had grown up in a concentration camp in Cambodia. While he was there he saw a little boy get shot because he had continued to play instead of standing as the soldiers walked past him.

Ear's family left China and moved to Cambodia before civil war and strife that racked it began. The 1975 invasion of the capital city, Phnom Penh, by Pol Pot and his Communist Khmer Rouge forces, led to the imprisonment or killing of millions of people who were not ethnically Khmer.

Cambodia saw almost two decades of civil war between the Khmer Rouge and the non-communist resistance forces. The situation was further complicated by the constant presence of Vietnamese soldiers. During this time millions of people died from either malnutrition or torture, and more than 600,000 Cambodians fled as refugees.

The surname of Ear's family was originally Yung. They changed their name to save themselves from being persecuted. The Khmer Rouge were also known for killing anyone who was considered to be educated or a professional because they feared a revolution against their reign. Ear's mother gave up her profession as a sewing teacher and became a homemaker instead.

Even though they had taken precautions, they were still put into a concentration camp in Phnom Penh.

The concentration camp was strictly guarded. Each week, prisoners were rationed one cup of rice from which they would make a watery soup that contained only a few grains. Relief organizations like the Red Cross were unable to help as they feared that any food that they would try to provide would end up feeding the guerilla insurgents. This was the life that was normal to Ear – he had been living in the camp since almost the time he was born.

When Ear was six years old his family escaped from the concentration



U.S. Army photo by Al Zdarsky

**Cadet Ekzhin Ear, University of California – Long Beach, shown here at the regimental activation ceremony for 4th Regiment, spent much of his childhood in a concentration camp in Cambodia's capital city of Phnom Penh.**

camp. He remembers his father and other men grabbing the children and running into the swampy fields to hide out. Their goal was to make it to the border of Thailand more than 150 miles distant. They would travel at night and sleep in the tall rice fields during the day.

During their trip, Ear awoke to the sound of gunfire. He was scared and started to cry. The men said they needed to get rid of the boy or else they would all be caught. His father told them that he would take care of it.

"My father gave me something and it

knocked me out," Ear explained. "When I woke up, we were in Thailand."

After making it to Thailand, Ear's family contacted a relative in San Francisco, who sponsored them into the United States. Their life in America started out rough; even enduring six months of living homeless. His mother and father started off working menial jobs for low pay. Even though their arrival in America had its bumps, Ear quickly gained a great appreciation for his new country. He received formal education for the first time in his life. His mother also continued her education and went

on to become an accountant.

Ear knows that because of America he has a good future ahead. He joined the military so that he could help make a better future for others. His parents were hesitant when he joined the Army. They wondered why he was voluntarily going into the military and could be sent to places like Iraq. They didn't understand why he should put his life at risk in other countries when nobody had come to save them in Cambodia.

"When I was in Cambodia I wished that someone would come and help me," Ear said. He wanted to go out and help others.

He hasn't decided whether his military career will take him through the ranks or whether he will someday pursue a career teaching and helping students.

Ear no longer has a reason to fear soldiers – in fact, his military career is off to a great start. He received an Army Achievement Medal for being the Regimental Honor Graduate at his Advanced Individual Training.

Later his outstanding attitude, high state of physical readiness and willingness to go the extra mile made him an easy choice when his cadre were notified of a last minute slot for Mountain Warfare School.

"Cadet Ear is the kind of cadet that everyone in the program, cadre and cadets alike, learn from," said Lt. Col. R. Kyle George, Professor of Military Science at University of Southern California. "He'll make an outstanding leader because of his innate superlative leadership abilities that have been honed and improved throughout his Army ROTC experience."







U.S. Army photo by 2nd Lt. Will Brown

Cadets from 2nd Regiment proceeding through “the Crucible” treat a training subject at LDAC’s new first aid training committee.

## First aid added to core training

By 2nd Lt. John Landry

Warrior Forge Public Affairs

In times of complete chaos, when most people are prone to lose their focus, Soldiers are expected to perform extraordinary tasks – such as saving a life.

At Warrior Forge 2005, first aid has been added to the regimen of training tasks. Soldiers hope they never have to use first aid skills – when you’re using them it means something didn’t go as planned. Warrior Forge planners include it in the battery of events here so that if something does go wrong in the field, Soldiers are prepared to act.

Even the Soldiers facilitating the event are benefiting from the training.

2nd Lt. Christopher Ford is the assistant officer in charge of the first aid committee.

“We didn’t learn first aid skills last year here at camp,” Ford said. “Hearing these classes over and over again has really reinforced my knowledge of first

aid. It has made me more competent as an officer, and provided that one extra step to becoming an effective officer.”

The lessons include proper carrying techniques, how to check for vital signs, all the proper bandage techniques and how to report injuries during medivac operations.

First aid this year takes the place of Nuclear, Biological, Chemical defense training, but the first aid committee does include chemical mask training and a trip through the infamous “gas chamber.”

After classroom training and a series of hands-on stations, cadets are evaluated on what they’ve learned during an event called “the Crucible.” This evaluative phase of training is squad-based and puts cadets in a real-time scenario in which they find a wounded Soldier and must tend to his injuries and call for medical help.

“It gives you a first look at talking into a radio doing the nine line medivac,” said Cadet Eduardo Rivera, 1st Regiment, “which could come in handy later on.”

## Cadet aims for chaplaincy as warrior, leader, servant

By 2nd Lt. Will Brown

Warrior Forge Public Affairs

*And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant. (Matthew 20:27)*

This Bible passage, a favorite of Cadet Charles Benjamin Houston, 1st Regiment, truly defines the mission of the United States Army officer.

Like thousands of other cadets this summer, Houston will push himself to the limit – and display acts of courage, competence and leadership.

One thing that separates Houston from his peers is that next year, when his fellow warriors are headed to Officer Basic Course, he will be attempting to receive an academic delay on his commission in his quest to become an Army chaplain.

Fear, separation from family and the business of war conspire to sap the strength and resolve of a Soldier. Chaplains are, for some, the natural link to the supernatural power that can recharge them.

“Soldiers often need to talk to a chaplain for various reasons,” said 1st Regiment Chaplain 1st Lt. Andrew Bloomfield. “Stress on the job, problems at home, and sometimes answering the question, ‘Does God still love me?’”

Houston is well on his way to achieving his dreams.

At 20 years old, he became an ordained minister, serving at Triumphant Baptist Church in Hyattsville, Md. As a boy he won a Grammy singing with the Maryland Boys Choir. He is the president of the Morehouse College Chapel Assistants Program in Atlanta, Ga. When he completes his bachelor’s degree at Morehouse next year, Charles plans to attending Boston University to work on his Masters of Divinity.

Houston said he has always had a great respect for the military. His grandfather was a Soldier and Charles himself was extremely active in Junior ROTC at St. Johns College High School in Washington D.C. He loves the opportunity to use his skills as a preacher to benefit American Soldiers.

Soldiers are complex. Besides having the conflicts of ordinary life, they are often faced with physical and spiritual adversity that the common man will not ordinarily have to endure. Houston said he decided to be a chaplain for several reasons. One is that while it takes a special commitment to be a preacher, it takes an extra special commitment to be a Soldier at the same time.

“I realized at a young age that a Soldier was much more complex than what the average civilian sees in the movie. Soldiers are servants of the people,” Houston explained. “They sacrifice their time and effort on a daily basis and when necessary, are willing to make the ultimate sacrifice.

“I love the part of the Warrior Ethos that says ‘I serve the people of the United States,’ knowing that I will be serving those who stand ready to fight and defend their nation makes being a chaplain in the Army much more rewarding.

“I also love the standards that the military holds their people to,” Houston added. “Besides being a preacher I’ll have to maintain physical fitness and be capable of humping my ruck just like the rest of the troops.”



Houston





# Cadets soak up Combat Water Safety Test



**Cadet Felix Chan, 4th Regiment, keeps hold of his rifle despite crashing backward into the water loaded down with uniform, weapon and LBE.**

U.S. Army photo by Al Zdarsky

**By 2nd Lt. Will Brown**  
*Warrior Forge Public Affairs*

**T**he cadets of Warrior Forge prepare themselves to be successful in all types of environments.

Water safety is often taken for granted. In Operation Iraqi Freedom, 165 fatalities have been attributed to drowning. The Combat Water Safety Test equips tomorrow's leaders with the necessary tools to save themselves and protect their Soldiers from needless deaths and water related injuries.

Plus, on a planet that's about 80 percent covered with water, it's a fair bet that at times an Army will be operating in or around large bodies of water. So it's important to be prepared.

So Warrior Forge planners ensure preparedness. On Day 10 of their stay at Fort Lewis, cadets are required to pass the Army's Combat Water Safety Test.

The CWST involves several training events.

The first event is the 25-meter swim. Cadets must

swim 25 meters using authorized methods of stroke. Next, they buckle on some load-bearing equipment and are handed an M-16. Then they must swim 15 meters without losing any of their equipment.

After the successful completion of those two events they scale a ladder onto a three-meter board. At the top, they are blindfolded and guided to the edge of the board. After sounding off with their name, university and preferred branch of service, they step off the board with great courage and plummet into the water below.

When they have completed the three-meter drop, they arrive at the equipment ditch station. The object of this station is to successfully remove all of your equipment while under water. This event teaches a Soldier how to properly get rid of his equipment so it won't cause him to drown.

The final event is the Expedient Flotation Device Station. Here cadets learn how to use their BDU's as a lifesaving tool. The Soldier must remove his or her BDU bottoms, tie off the legs, and capture

the necessary amount of air in them to keep them afloat. The pants are then used to assist in keeping a casualty safe and afloat.

Cadet John Moore, 3rd Regiment, believes water safety skills are extremely important.

"Soldiers should be able to operate in any type of environment they are faced with," Moore said. "Also, the Warrior Ethos states that we will never leave a fallen comrade. Utilizing the expedient flotation device training will help us ensure that we can achieve that successfully."

Cadet Amanda Guzzik from Southern Illinois University said CWST is important because it saves Soldiers.

"The event is a big motivator for cadets," Guzzik said. "We have the opportunity to cheer and motivate our peers that have to overcome the challenges of being a weak swimmer, fear of heights, or both."

The successful completion of the Combat Water Safety Test is a requirement for commissioning and achievement of the coveted RECONDO Badge.